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Politics

Saint Mary's College of California

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POLITICS

The politics major is designed to provide a systematic understanding of political power, political processes, and political institutions, both in the United States and the world at large. Politics majors gain insight into public affairs; improve their conceptual, analytical, critical and communication skills; and explore normative questions concerning the relation of individuals to governments and of governments to one another. The curriculum offers courses in five fields: American government, political theory, international relations, public administration, and comparative politics. The department advises students to divide their work among the five fields, although a concentrated major may be advised in a particular case. The department also recommends substantial coursework in related disciplines such as economics, history, or philosophy.

The politics major is not designed as a vocational major. It provides a liberal arts education that fosters responsible civic engagement and an appreciation of diverse political cultures and identities. It prepares students for careers in government service, international affairs, secondary school teaching, journalism, community service, and business. It also serves the needs of students who seek postgraduate education in political science, the law, public policy, and international studies. Students seeking a career in the legal profession will find that the Politics Department's law-related courses will prepare them with a broad background and specific tools with which to undertake their legal education.

Students who expect to pursue graduate study in politics should note that knowledge of foreign languages and/or statistics is usually required for a graduate degree. Knowledge of modern languages is also particularly important for careers in international affairs. Department faculty advisors assist students in the selection of appropriate courses.

The department participates in several off-campus programs that allow students to combine study with practical experience in public life. Students may arrange to receive academic credit for internships with local agencies, officials, or political groups. Students interested in American politics can spend a semester studying at American University in Washington, D.C., which includes an internship with a government agency or interest group. A similar arrangement with the California State University in Sacramento provides an opportunity to study California state government. Students majoring in politics may also participate in the Model United Nations Conference held each year at Harvard University.

FACULTY

Melinda R. Thomas, J.D., *Associate Professor, Chair*

Hisham Ahmed, Ph.D., *Professor*

Ronald Ahnen, Ph.D., *Associate Professor*

David Alvarez, Ph.D., *Professor*

Patrizia Longo, Ph.D., *Professor*

Miriam Murase, Ph.D., *Lecturer*

Jack R. Rasmus, Ph.D., *Lecturer*

Stephen Sloane, Ph.D., *Associate Professor*

Susan C. Weissman, Ph.D., *Professor*

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who graduate with a politics major will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of institutions, principles and theories of American constitutional democracy.
- demonstrate substantive knowledge of:
 - a) political theory and structure, b) dynamics of political conflict, and
 - c) historical and cultural contexts of political events.
- produce clear and effective analysis of significant political issues.
- demonstrate understanding of, and proficiency in, use of standard research techniques relevant to political science issues.
- develop a commitment to civil engagement.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

LOWER DIVISION

Politics 1, 2, 3, 4

UPPER DIVISION

One course in American politics, one course in political theory, one course in international politics, and one course in comparative politics to be selected only from the corresponding lists below. In addition, students must take any five additional politics courses.

Group I American Politics: **101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 130, 133, 135, 136**

Group II Political Theory: **111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116**

Group III International Politics: **120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125**

Group IV Comparative Politics: **140, 141, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149**

The department faculty recommend that students taking an upper-division course in comparative politics complete **Politics 1** first; or international politics, **Politics 1** or **2** is recommended first; for American politics, **Politics 2** is recommended first; and for political theory, **Politics 3** is recommended first.

MINOR REQUIREMENTS

The minor in politics requires seven (7) courses: three of the four lower-division politics courses (**POL 1, POL 2, POL 3, POL 4**); and four upper-division politics courses—one course in American politics; one course in comparative politics; one course in international politics; one course in political theory.

PREREQUISITE GRADE

Any course listed in this department with a prerequisite assumes a grade of C– or better in the prerequisite course.

C O U R S E S

LOWER DIVISION

1 Introduction to Comparative Politics

A comparative survey of politics in countries and regions other than the United States. Focus is on political culture and socialization, socio-economic structure and class interests, government institutions and electoral processes, political parties, and major shifts in public policy. Themes of globalization, social justice, and democratization are emphasized. Case studies vary, but may include Great Britain, Japan, Russia, Mexico, and Nigeria.

2 Introduction to American Politics

Survey of the principal institutions and processes of the American political system. Topics include constitutional origins and development, political parties, elections, Congress, presidency, bureaucracy and the federal courts.

3 Introduction to Political Thought

A survey of the great political ideas and ideologies that have shaped the history of politics. Topics include core political concepts such as liberty, justice, and equality, as well as organized belief systems such as liberalism, conservatism, and socialism. Students learn to analyze and evaluate political values and to apply them to practical political problems.

4 Introduction To Political Economy

This course provides an overview of the various major schools and approaches to the field of political economy. Both economic approaches to analyzing politics, as well as political approaches to analyzing economics, are considered. Themes include: the role of government in economic stabilization, income distribution and theories of distributive justice, political business cycles, and economics and democratic theory.

UPPER DIVISION

101 State and Urban Politics

Survey of current issues and problems in state and city government. Analysis of the evolutionary nature of such issues and problems through a comparison of the historical and contemporary experiences of cities and states. Topics include the distribution of power in the community; the organization of city government; state executive and legislative processes; and community responses to law enforcement, social welfare, education, and taxation.

102 Political Parties and Pressure Groups

An investigation into the theory and practice of political groups. Analysis of the nature of political behavior within and among groups through reading and discussion of classic texts on groups. Topics include the influence of the political environment on group activity; the roles of leaders and followers; the identification and pursuit of group goals; the organization and function of American political parties; and the phenomenon of party loyalty.

Curriculum Politics

103 Elections and Voting Behavior

A study of the electoral process in America with emphases on the organization and the conduct of elections, and the behavior of the electorate. Topics include campaign organization, primaries and nominations, the role of the media, the impact of issues and personalities, and electoral realignment. Depending on the year, the course will focus on presidential elections or the midterm congressional elections. **Politics 102** is not a prerequisite for this course.

104 United States Public and Constitutional Law

A study of landmark opinions of the United States Supreme Court in the context of the constitutional and political structures of American democracy. Significant topics of traditional and contemporary concern covered include the tension between authority of the federal government and states' rights, politics of the Supreme Court, issues arising out of the balance or imbalance of powers among branches of government, the right of judicial review, government regulation, and protections and limitations on civil rights. Legal analysis and legal reasoning are taught as well as case analysis and application.

105 Presidency and Congress

An investigation of the institutional and behavioral characteristics of the presidency and the Congress. The course focuses upon the development of the office of the presidency, the nature and scope of presidential power, and the interaction of the presidency with the cabinet, bureaucracy, media, political parties, and public opinion. It also considers the operation of the modern Congress through an examination of the committee system, congressional procedures and customs, and the relationship between the representative and the constituency.

106 Politics of Labor

A study of the American labor movement from its early economic militancy through its later political passivity to its renewed vigor in the present time. Topics include de-industrialization and the transformation of work, the changing gender, ethnic and racial composition of the work force, the plight of immigrants and undocumented workers, and how the employer offensive and labor laws affect unionization. We also look at student-labor relations, labor and the environment, the role benefits play in contract negotiations and strikes, the impact of globalization on labor, and the struggle to democratize the unions. The readings chronicle and analyze the history of the American labor movement, study the connections between labor struggles and politics, and how labor is perceived by the larger public. A special feature of this course is a series of speakers from the labor movement who address the issues they face.

107 American Legal Institutions

A survey of the American judicial process. The role of the courts in the political process is described, with special emphasis on the Supreme Court. Topics include: how judges are selected, how courts decide cases, the limits of the courts' power, and the impact of court rulings.

108 CIA and the Intelligence Community*

An investigation into the role of the intelligence community in the formulation and conduct of American foreign policy. The course focuses on the Central Intelligence Agency but also considers other members of the intelligence community such as the National Security Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency. Topics include covert operations, intelligence collection and analysis, counterintelligence, and oversight and control of intelligence activities.

109 Topics in American Politics

A detailed analysis of selected problems in American politics involving the investigation of such contemporary issues as campaign reform, morality in politics, executive-legislative relationships, the military in American politics, and legal-political issues of the intelligence apparatus. May be repeated for credit as content varies.

110 Minority Politics*

An examination of the racial and ethnic dimensions of American politics. Topics include the growing diversity of the American population; government policies on civil rights, affirmative action and immigration; political participation by, and political conflicts among, racial and ethnic groups; and the impact of ethnic and racial subcultures on contemporary politics.

111 Modern Political Thought*

Works by modern masters of political theory from the Protestant reformation up to the contemporary era are compared and contrasted. Topics include the alternative theoretical foundations of modern political movements and regimes. Students learn to evaluate and criticize political ideas and gain insight into contemporary political problems.

112 American Political Thought*

This course seeks to illuminate the philosophical antecedents to the foundations of the American government as well as the thought of the Founders themselves, and concludes with a review of some of the diverse views regarding the American political order.

113 Political Psychology**

This course surveys the relationship between psychological and political phenomena. Attention is given to classic works which have significantly shaped the field. Topics include theories of human nature, personality and politics, the nature of political beliefs and values, the psychology of political conflict, political leadership, and decision-making. Psychoanalytic, behavioral, cognitive and humanistic perspectives are examined.

114 Topics in Political Thought*

A detailed investigation of selected problems in political thought. Topics such as freedom, equality, justice, authority, ideology, violence, political economy and political psychology are explored. May be repeated for credit as content varies.

115 Theories of Justice

The course examines different theories of justice based on concepts such as "fairness", "equal treatment", and "getting one's due". These alternative theories are then applied to contemporary controversies concerning economic, racial, sexual, and environmental justice and to current debates about such issues as immigration, euthanasia, abortion, and capital punishment.

116 Political Polling and Survey Research

This course explores the theoretical basis of modern empirical methods of investigating political behavior. The course stresses the development of empirical theories of politics through the formation and testing of hypotheses. Emphasis is on the use of survey instruments, polling techniques, and data analysis. Throughout the semester, students work in groups to complete a research project for a local nonprofit organization.

120 International Relations

Although the phenomenon of conflict and war has been the primary focus of international relations, the global political system remains lacking in organization and stability. Interstate violence and involvement of non-state actors and sub-state actors in armed conflict seems to be on the rise. On the other hand, attempts at political, economic, social, and environmental co-operation among states also continue, albeit at a slower pace. The course addresses this complex and mixed nature of modern international relations. The course examines schools of thought that have impacted analysis of international relations, including realism, liberalism, constructivism, and feminism. The course explores theoretical frameworks of international relations in an attempt to understand how, why, and where the national interests of some actors collide and others coalesce.

121 International Political Economy

This course addresses the growing integration of national economies and financial systems worldwide and its consequence for national political institutions, policymaking, sovereignty, and democracy. The course will focus on the evolution of international trade theory and policies since 1945, trends in foreign direct investment and the 'securitization' revolution in international finance, and the evolution of transnational institutions (WTO, World Bank, IMF, etc.) and free trade mega-blocs (NAFTA-CAFTA, EU, etc.). Special focus is given to current and recent international financial crises and the impact of globalization on U.S. domestic economic policy, economic growth, income distribution, and the evolution of the corporate form of business. The course concludes with a review of the different responses and challenges to global economic integration today by environmentalist, worker-union, and other grass-roots 'civil society'-based organizations. *Prerequisite: POL 004 or ECON 004 (or equivalent).*

122 Topics in International Politics*

A detailed analysis of selected problems in international politics, involving case studies of major geographical regions such as Western Europe, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, together with a critical examination of the influence of contemporary ideologies on the behavior of nation states. May be repeated for credit as content varies.

123 American Foreign Policy

An investigation of United States foreign policy in the post-World War II period, from the beginning of the Cold War to the present. Consideration of current political, economic, social and ecological problems that challenge developments in foreign policy, with special attention paid to political, economic and military policy priorities. Topics include unilateralism, military intervention, the role of human rights in foreign policy strategy, examining American interests and purposes in the war on terrorism, empire, war and occupation in Iraq, U.S. policy toward the Middle East as a whole; global trade issues (including the role of NAFTA, the IMF, WTO and FTAA), nuclear proliferation and defense policy, national conflicts, the continuing disintegration of the former Soviet Union and its impact on global issues.

124 Defense Policy

The course examines U.S. national security policy objectives, the military strategies and institutions that have been designed to achieve these objectives and the defense capabilities that can be used to accomplish political and economic goals. The focus of readings and class discussion is on the following topics: the international environment as the setting for the making of American defense policy; the evolution of U.S. strategy; World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam as case studies; arms control; the institutional structure and processes of defense policy; military professionalism; reform and appraisal.

125 Human Rights

Three main areas of human rights are examined: 1) human rights theory and the philosophical foundation of human rights, 2) the international institutions, international law, and regional mechanisms for protecting rights, 3) an overview of major empirical theories of rights, identifying economic, political, and social factors and actors that shape present-day human rights conditions.

130 Introduction to Public Administration

A basic introduction to the theory and practice of public administration. Major works in organization and decision theory are read, and particular attention is given to the creation and implementation of programs in the U.S. federal government.

133 Comparative Administration

An introduction to the comparative study of government administration in various nations of the world. Attention is given to the effects cultural and historical differences have on the development of a country's governmental arrangements and processes, and to the different ways other countries deal with the problems and changes in the world with which we also must contend.

135 Environmental Politics

A political analysis of environmental problems such as pollution, energy shortages, population growth, climate change, and the destruction of wilderness areas. Public policies to address these problems both here and in other countries are examined. Ethical aspects of environmental issues are explored.

136 Environmental Law and Regulation

Examination of alternative legal mechanisms for protecting the environment. Topics include environmental torts and remedies; environmental criminal law; private property rights and the "public trust" doctrine; administrative regulations and standards; economic incentive statuses; federal vs. state environmental jurisdiction; and international environmental agreements.

140 Gender Politics

A study of the social, economic, political, and legal status of women in contemporary America and in other countries. The course examines the dynamic changes taking place in the relationship between women and men. Topics include the history of women's liberation movements, the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, sexism in the workplace, feminist social theory, and women in politics.

Curriculum Politics

141 Contemporary Revolutions

A comparative study of failed and successful revolutions of the 20th century, examining revolutionary theory and the debates between revolutionaries. Using primary texts, students read the theorists and practitioners of each revolution studied. Cases include the successful Russian Revolution as the first model, followed by the unsuccessful German and Spanish revolutions, the Chinese and the Cuban revolutions, the attempted French revolution of May 1968, the Chilean revolutionary process of 1970–73, the Vietnamese Civil War, the Iranian and Nicaraguan revolutions of 1979. Eastern European revolutions of 1989 are examined as the completion of the failed process of imposed revolutions from above and without after 1945. The causes and basis of social conflict are explored as well as the way rebellions, riots and insurrections can turn into revolutions. Questions are posed for the contemporary post-Cold War world: after the Seattle ferment around globalization and the rise of religious nationalism and terror in the post-September 11 reaction, are revolutions in order?

143 Middle East Politics*

An introductory comparative politics course in the Middle East, the course analyzes such specific problems as the role of the military, the process of modernization, the impact of state proliferation, and the consequences of socioeconomic disparities resulting from the influx of oil wealth. In addition to providing a brief survey of major historical developments since World War I and their impact on current issues, the course examines intra-Arab and Israeli-Arab conflicts.

144 Asian Politics*

A survey of political systems in northeast Asia (including China, Japan, Korean peninsula) and southeast Asia (including Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines). Emphasis on modern history, economic development, democratization, political culture, and international relations.

145 Latin American Politics*

An examination of the historical evolution and present state of political systems in Mexico, Central America, and Southern Cone countries. Alternative theoretical explanations of democratization, democratic consolidation, and the links between public policy and socio-economic development are emphasized. Major themes of the course include measuring and explaining the quality of democratic governance, institutional variations, social justice, human rights, ideologies, and US policy toward the region.

146 West European Politics*

Examination of politics, institutions, ideologies, patterns of stability and change in selected countries such as Great Britain, France, and Germany. Theory of comparative studies.

147 Soviet and Post-Soviet Russian Politics

A survey of the historical, social, political and economic development, disintegration and demise of the Soviet Union from the revolution to the present. The course takes an interdisciplinary and theoretical approach beginning with Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin, and goes on to Gorbachev's attempted reform, and the disintegration of the USSR. The course finishes with an examination of the contradictions facing the present Russian government in its attempt at integration into the world economy and its response to the terminal crisis of a system in collapse.

148 East European Politics**

East Europeans have lived through all the great 'isms' of the last century, ending up with post-Soviet global neo-liberal capitalism today. The course focuses on the creation and evolution of the Soviet bloc, the attempts at reform in Eastern Europe, looking at case histories of Hungary, Poland, the former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, the absorption of East Germany by West Germany, and the process of integration into the world economy. Topics include the revolutions of 1989, the dilemmas of democratization, the rise of nationalism, the problem of privatization, the rise and decline of civil society, and the social costs of transformation. A large part of the course is devoted to an examination of ongoing changes and toward that end a variety of topical issues are explored in some detail.

149 Topics in Comparative Politics

Examination of political systems not covered in other courses, investigating selected areas such as African, Canadian, or Pacific Rim countries. May be repeated for credit as content varies.

190 Social Justice Speakers Series (.25)

This quarter-credit course focuses on different aspects of social justice in conjunction with the "social justice speakers" who are invited to speak on our campus. The course helps the students explore the topics presented by the speakers through pertinent readings and follow-up discussions.

191 Remembrance and Resistance (.25)

This quarter-credit course is offered in conjunction with a trip to Fort Benning, Georgia to participate in the vigil that remembers victims of human rights atrocities in Latin America and to protest against training that may induce Latin American military officers to commit such atrocities. Requires six weekly discussion sessions and participation in the vigil and protest during the third weekend of November.

195 Internship in Government

Offers the student the opportunity to earn credit while learning about the day-to-day functioning of government by working part-time in the office of a government agency or elected official. Internships in local, state, and federal offices may be arranged to fit the interests of the student. Student must be in good academic standing.

197 Special Study

An independent study or research course for students whose needs are not met by the regular course offerings of the department. Permission of instructor and department chairperson required.

199 Honors-Special Study

An independent study or research course for upper-division majors with a B average in government. Permission of the instructor and department chair required.

**Offered in alternate years.*

***Offered at least once in a three-year period.*